

LAND USE ELEMENT

Introduction

Land, and the uses to which it is put, constitute the base scale on which all other aspects of development are founded. Land use and development patterns establish the foundation for the Comprehensive Plan. Consequently, the principal objective of this Land Use Plan Amendment is to determine the most suitable and efficient use of the land and the pattern in which these uses will occur.

The integration of existing development patterns, growth trends and the analysis of land development capacity (the ability of the land resource to support development), the interpretation of the County's vision, guiding principles and goals and objectives were the underlying tenants of this Future Land Use Plan.

The majority of existing land use in the county is low-density single-family housing and agricultural/conservation (National Forest) land. Commercial and industrial uses are clustered within and around the City of Dahlonega and along major road corridors. Although the county will experience substantial growth in the future, it is expected that low-density single-family residential and existing agricultural/conservation land will continue to be predominate land uses of the future throughout the county. Non-residential uses are proposed within village centers, gateway and industrial workplace corridors to support the future residential growth.

The continuous residential development that the county has experienced has had a tremendous impact on existing agricultural uses, infrastructure, public services and sensitive environmental areas. Of primary concern is the lack of a public sewerage system and the subsequent reliance on septic systems.

As the metropolitan Atlanta region continues to expand and more people flee urban growth pressures, Lumpkin and its surrounding counties will continue to see a greater influx of residents. This land use plan does not propose to alter the predominance of single-family residential development, but merely seeks to guide this development in a comprehensive and logical manner that respects natural resources, coordinates infrastructure, and promotes retail and employment opportunities to adequately serve this new growth in appropriate locations. Although Lumpkin County is expected to remain low-density, a greater emphasis will need to be placed on

varied housing types, commercial services to support forecasted population, and an emphasis on industrial and office growth in order to develop a more evenly balanced economy.

■ **Historic Patterns of Growth**

The area that is now Lumpkin County was part of the Cherokee Nation. White settlement in the area was sparse before the 1820s, but a few settlers arrived as early as 1810. The discovery of gold around 1828 led to the County's first major gold rush. In 1830, Georgia claimed ownership of the Cherokee lands and called it Cherokee County. In 1832, the State further divided this area into 10 counties, Lumpkin being one. Auraria, one of the first settlements within the county developed in response to the gold rush. It is believed that early in its existence, Auraria may have had several thousand residents, which decreased significantly by the 1850s. Dahlonega, located five miles north of Auraria, was established as the permanent county seat in 1833. The peak of gold mining activities in Lumpkin County was from 1829 to 1840.

Historically agriculture has been a major land use within Lumpkin County, however, over the last decade the number and size of farms has decreased. In 1982, agriculture represented approximately 16% of total county land area. Currently the total land constituted by farmland is approximately 13.9%. As with most rural counties located in the north Georgia mountain region, growth and development is a mixture of low density residential, agriculture, and scattered commercial located along major transportation corridors. High-density areas and clustered development are located in the City of Dahlonega (where water and sewer are available) and at historic crossroads.

■ **Land Use Categories and Growth Patterns**

An inventory and analysis of existing land use was conducted to establish the type, spatial distribution and intensity of development within the county. Inventoried parcels were classified by primary use and transferred to a map depicting existing land use. The County's current comprehensive plan divided the county into 15 planning areas. Initial land use planning utilized these planning areas as a base to establish existing land use patterns and potential trends. These existing land use planning districts were based on voting district and not

any specific land use planning rational. Therefore, the county has determined that these planning areas be eliminated as a land use planning tool in this current Land Use Planning Amendment. These same planning areas have been used to describe existing land uses. A full listing of land uses by planning area is attached as Appendix C.

For planning purposes, land uses are identified under the categories and grouped by major category in accordance with State DCA guidelines. These categories are used on the Existing Land Use map and form the basis of the Future Land Use Map Plan.

Agriculture and Forestry

Defined: Land being actively farmed, including crop cultivation or livestock operations, or set-aside for timber management as an agricultural pursuit. Residences consisting of individual houses or manufactured homes, commonly on individual lots at very low densities.

Active farmland and the rural character are major characteristics of Lumpkin County. Types of agricultural uses can be categorized into three areas: intensive farming, rural areas with small farms and a transitional area that has maintained its rural character, while at the same time is making the transition to a more residential area.

Agriculture is scattered throughout Lumpkin County, with un-even distribution. There is no agriculture in either the **Dahlonega** or **Martins Ford** Planning Areas. As would be expected, areas such as **Hightower** and **Davis**, with extreme topography contain little scattered agriculture. **Chestatee**, mostly within the Chattahoochee National Forest, has very scattered agriculture. **Frogtown** also contains rural scattered agriculture. **Crumby**, the most vacant area in Lumpkin, has little scattered agriculture throughout. Planning areas which contain specific locations of agriculture are: **Porter Springs** – northern portion only; Shoal **Creek** – eastern and southeastern portions; **Auraria** – forested agriculture limited to Ben Higgins and Auraria Roads area. Planning Areas, which contain mostly protected areas, are **Nimblewill**, with agriculture in westernmost portion north of State Route 52; **Cane Creek** – very low-density agriculture in southern portion; and **Yahoola** with low density agriculture also in the southern portion. Major agriculture exists within **Mill Creek** and **Wahoo** planning areas

Scattered suburban development has caused a multitude of problems, including inconsistent county services and infrastructure, negative impacts to the rural character and natural resources of the county, and incompatible land uses with existing farms. Although a measure of protection has been given agricultural uses within the county, the current trend is the conversion of farmland into residential uses as development pressures continue and land prices (and taxes) continue to rise. The County has taken additional measures to protect its "rural" character by developing the agricultural preservation character area that discourages incompatible uses (primarily residential subdivisions) and requiring "second in" uses to provide adequate buffers.

Residential

Defined: Land devoted to permanent living accommodations, including lots containing houses or manufactured homes, housing subdivision developments, and buildings containing multiple housing units attached horizontally (such as duplexes or town homes) or vertically (like apartments).

Residential uses vary greatly among the Planning Areas. While concentrated areas of housing do exist, it is of note that most residential development is scattered throughout the county, and is often located on individual lots. This patterning is usually located along roadways and at intersections. Single-family residential growth has been the strongest area of new development with the majority occurring in classic suburban subdivisions. Single-family development, including stick built and manufactured homes has accounted for the majority of new growth in Lumpkin County during the last thirty years. The second home market continues to grow especially around the Frogtown area. New homes and subdivisions continue to spread out into the rural areas of the County. Because of a lack of sewer in the unincorporated area, densities have remained low and sprawled across the county.

Multi-family and other types of housing products such as duplexes, townhouses and condominiums have been slow to come to Lumpkin County, with most developments concentrated around Dahlonega. Due to sewerage limitations, this trend is seen to continue, with the exception of some limited housing types in master planned developments and mixed use villages.

Areas of very low-density residential use are primarily located in the northernmost area of the County. These planning districts include Nimblewill, Hightower, Cane Creek and Yahoola. Low-density residential use is found within Chestatee, Frogtown, Porter Springs, Crumby, Wahoo, and Davis planning areas. The remaining Planning Area, **Dahlonega**, contains the highest density of development within the County. Medium densities for the County are to be found in **Shoal Creek**, **Auraria**, and **Mill Creek** in its' southern area. **Chestatee** has significant single-family development in the southern area. **Frogtown** demonstrates significant subdivision growth and 2nd family housing developed along the Chestatee River.

Manufactured home structures are scattered throughout the County, on both individual lots and within subdivisions. Current estimates indicate that at least 30% of the current housing stock consists of manufactured housing.

Areas of low mobile home densities on scattered individual lots include **Nimblewill**, **Hightower**, **Yahoola**, **Chestatee**, **Porter Springs**, **Crumby**, **Wahoo**, and **Shoal Creek** along Grindle Brothers Road, **Frogtown**, especially along Soapstone Road, Roy Grindle Road and Grindle Bridge Road, and **Auraria** along Cain Bridge Road. **Dahlonega** continues to have mobile homes placed within existing locations.

Higher concentrations and manufactured home subdivisions and parks exist in the following locations: in **Wahoo** in the Stonehenge subdivision at State Route 115 and Charlie Lumpkin Road; and east of State Route 115 near Jeff Sullens Road and Mt. Olive Church Road, in the southern area and along the eastside of Long Branch Road, Martins Ford Road, Mill Hill Road, and Floyd Sullens Road in **Martins Ford**, a small mobile home park along Castleberry Bridge Road. **Cane Creek** has mobile homes along Black Mountain and Wahsega Roads.

Portions of State Route 60 in **Martins Ford** and a development in the southern section of **Mill Creek** are proposed for mobile home developments.

Housing growth within the county is expected to remain strong due to the county's status of a "bedroom" community to the Atlanta metro area. Although the county will see higher densities within some of its activity nodes that are currently or are proposed to be serviced by water and sewer, the majority of new and existing

residential development will continue to be single-family residential. As land prices continue to increase, the county should see a reduction in the percentage of manufactured housing.

Commercial

Defined: Commercial developments occupied by establishments that offer goods or merchandise for sale or rent (retail), or provide a service. Offices and professional services such as medical or engineering offices, real estate offices and insurance agencies are part of this category. Such uses include stores, shopping centers, hotels, restaurants, gasoline stations, automobile body shops, physical fitness centers, markets, building supply centers, administrative operations and corporate offices.

Commercial growth has been a function of automobile accessibility, with the largest concentrations outside the City of Dahlonega are located at major thoroughfare intersections and along the established commercial corridors. Small-scale stores and neighborhood commercial is scattered throughout the county at historic crossroad junctions. Unfortunately, much of the earliest commercial development in the county occurred in the form of ubiquitous strip centers, fast food restaurants and gas stations that sprawl along major arterial roads. Commercial development within Lumpkin County consists of both sales and service uses. Tourist related commercial, such as gift shops, rustic furniture, restaurants and recreational activities are a large portion of the County's economic profile. As Lumpkin County continues to grow, commercial services will follow the residential population.

Another commercial product throughout Lumpkin County is what has been termed "cottage industries." These commercial enterprises are small business located within someone's home or on their property within an accessory building. A variety of uses from small retail outlets (quilts) to services (car repair) to craftsmanship (cabinet and furniture makers) are included under this designation. Although most existing businesses do not pose any problems, several accessory businesses are larger than the residential use, or are considered industrial in nature. The County values these entrepreneurial businesses and residents feel that they add to the overall fabric and character of the community. The Land Use Code takes this unique form of commercial development

into consideration, allowing a great deal of leeway. The Land Use Code also recognizes that sometimes a “cottage industry” has grown into a full-fledged commercial business. Development standards address potential non-conformity between land uses.

The County encourages commercial development with a “village” setting, or along specific major corridors. Two different village nodes have been developed: neighborhood and community, and are based on the type of commercial and the geographic service area. Larger type uses that are regional in scope are encouraged within a Commerce Corridor or within the Gateway Corridor. All villages and corridors, especially the Gateway Corridor (GA 400 and 60) have been developed to address site considerations and aesthetics. The Future Land Use Map was developed looking at historic crossroads areas of commercial development and available infrastructure.

The **Dahlonega** Planning Area is the main commercial node of the County. Its historic downtown provides an extensive mix of uses. Other commercial activity nodes include U.S. Highway 19 Business at Cavender Creek Road and State Route 52 at Town Creek Church.

Existing commercial nodes:

- Neighborhood
 - ③ Frogtown Planning Areas – Garnett Bridge and Shoffret Road
 - ③ Porter Springs Planning Area – Cavender Creek Road with Rail Hill Road and Porter Springs.
 - ③ Dahlonega Planning Area – Highway 19B, US 19/Cavender Creek, SR 52 at Town Creek Church Road
 - ③ Auraria Planning Area – intersection of Auraria Road and Castleberry Bridge Road.
- Regional Commercial/Highway Orientation
 - ③ US Highway 19 – strip commercial north of Dahlonega along 60 to Oak Grove Road to intersection of SR 60 and Camp Wahsega Road.
 - ③ South of the City along US Highway 19, SR 52, US 19 and Business 60.

Scattered commercial uses along existing roadways can be found in **Nimblewill**, **Frogtown**, **Wahoo**, **Hightower**, and **Yahoola**, along Wahsega Road between Black Mountain Road and State Route 9, along State Route 60 between Georgia 400 and Red Oak Flats Road, fronting Georgia 400 and Whelchel Road.

Industrial

Defined: Land dedicated to manufacturing facilities, processing plants, factories, warehousing and wholesale trade facilities or similar uses.

Industrial use areas within Lumpkin County are limited. Industrial uses in the county primarily consist of light industrial developments, industrial business parks, wholesale and distribution uses, which have capitalized on the county's valuable attributes of available land and accessibility.

Cane Creek has limited industrial areas, including the Lumpkin County Airport. The **Dahlonega** Planning area has the potential for infill development contained within the strip north of the City along U.S. Highway 19 Business, and within the newly developed Lumpkin County Industrial Park off of Georgia 400.

Attracting industrial land uses is favorable in Lumpkin County. Lumpkin County is serviced by ALLTEL Fibers: This will be an important growth determinant in attracting new economic providers to the County. Its uses will range from medical, educational, and industrial applications, to development of home office facilities. As part of Georgia's integrated electrical transmission system, Lumpkin has excellent ability to supply industrial demands. Compared to 47% of the U.S., coal comprises 84% of fuels used by the State's power generating plants. This assures long- term continuity. Georgia Natural Gas is available in industrial quantities on an interruptible basis. Because of direct access to regional transportation, these areas will continue to grow as the need for increased employment opportunities increases.

Current industrial locations include:

- Industrial Nodes
 - ③ Frogtown Planning Area – Garnett Bridge Road opposite Three Sons Road
 - ③ Dahlonega Planning Area – Cavender Creek just east of US 19.

Transportation, Communication and Utilities

Defined: This category includes such uses as power generation plants, railroad facilities, radio towers, public transit stations, telephone switching stations, streets and highways.

In Lumpkin County, uses classified in this category almost exclusively consist of streets, highways and the railroad tracks, along with cell towers, utility substations and power plants.

Public Institutional

Defined: State, federal or local government uses, and quasi-public institutions. Governmental uses include County administration buildings and the Courthouse, fire stations, libraries, post offices and public schools (but not parks). Institutional uses include churches, cemeteries and other private non-profit uses.

Public and institutional uses are typically not concentrated in specific locales. The majority of public and institutional uses in Lumpkin County are located within the County Seat of Dahlonega. Facilities that are publicly owned, but would be classified more accurately in another land use category, are not included in this category. For example, publicly owned parks and/or recreation facilities are placed in the Parks/Recreation/Conservation category, and general office buildings containing government offices are placed in a commercial category.

Parks Recreation Conservation

Defined: Land dedicated to active or passive recreational uses, natural resources conservation or reserved open space. These lands may be either publicly or privately owned and may include playgrounds, public parks, nature preserves, interpretative areas, wildlife management areas, national forests, golf courses, sports fields, recreation centers, or areas held in their natural state.

There are a total of 374 acres of public parkland within Lumpkin County, including Blackburn Park, Lumpkin County Park and Corps Lake Lanier property. In addition, Lumpkin County contains vast tracts of the Chattahoochee National Forest in the upper three-quarters of the county. Designated scenic turnoffs along certain roads offer majestic views of the national forest. The U.S. Forest Service provides protection of many of the most significant “viewsheds.” National parks and recreational areas include:

- ③ Chestatee Wildlife Management Area
- ③ Blue Ridge Wildlife Management Area
- ③ Desoto Falls National Forest
- ③ Dockery Lake
- ③ Waters Creek
- ③ Woody Gap

Undeveloped

Defined: Land not developed or not being used for a specific purpose, and lands where development has been abandoned or where deteriorated, vacant buildings are located. This category includes woodlands or pastureland (not in agricultural crop, livestock or commercial timber production), and undeveloped portions of residential subdivisions and industrial parks, water bodies (lakes, rivers etc.) and the locations of structures that have been vacant for some time.

Undeveloped lands are located throughout the county, but tend to predominate around areas adjacent to agricultural or residential uses. Other undeveloped land lies primarily within environmentally sensitive areas, such as steep slopes and floodplain.

Existing Land Use Patterns

The following is a breakdown of existing land uses within the county's previous land use planning element of its comprehensive plan. As stated earlier, the county has chosen not to utilize these planning areas as the planning basis for this Land Use Plan Amendment. The following planning area breakdowns are given as background information and illustration purposes only.

■ **Chestatee Planning Area—Northern Most Section**

- ③ Majority Chattahoochee National Forrest
- ③ Active agriculture adjacent to John Crow and Jim Anderson Roads
- ③ Scattered SF in southern portion (average density?)
- ③ Residential development along Hester Gap Road with a subdivision on the east side of SR60 and Cedar Mt. Road
- ③ Elmer Cain Road
- ③ Few Mobile homes
- ③ Small-scale commercial - U.S. 129/John Crow Rd.
- ③ Restaurant at Turners Corner
- ③ Campground restaurant and store 1 mile north of Turner's corner on the east side of U.S. 129
- ③ Natural Resources:
 - ③ Waters Creek
 - ③ Boggs Creek
 - ③ Dockery Lake

■ **Frogtown Planning Area**

- ③ Rural single family and agriculture
- ③ Subdivision adjacent to Chestatee River along Horseshoe Bend Road and Rivermist Drive
- ③ Single Mobile homes adjacent to Soapstone, Grindle and Grindle Bridge Road
- ③ Vacant commercial fronting Garnett road
- ③ Convenient store & feed mill @ Garnett Bridge and Shoffret Road
- ③ Industrial South of Garnett Bridge Road opposite Three Sons Road

■ **Porter Springs Planning Area**

- ③ Northern 2/3 rds Chattahoochee National Forrest
- ③ Rural mix of scattered single family, mobile homes and agricultural
- ③ More density developed residential along north and south sides of Cavender Creek, individual mobile homes
- ③ Mobile Home Park at Cavender Creek between Esborn Seabolt Road and Porter Springs Road
- ③ Commercial and industrial uses along Cavender Creek

- ③ Carburetor shop on McDonald Road
- ③ Expansion of commercial—intersection of Cavender Creek Road with Rail Hill Road and Porter Springs.

■ **Dahlonega Planning Area**

- ③ US Highway Business 19—strip commercial north of Dahlonega along Hwy 60 to Oak Grove Road to intersection of SR 60 and Camp Wahsega Road
- ③ South of the city along US Highway 19, SR 52, US 19, SR 52, US19, Bus/60—Scattered Commercial
- ③ Established SF Neighborhoods along Anderson Drive, Creek Valley Road and Owens Road North of City
- ③ Establish SF Neighborhood along Deer Run and Calhoun Road
- ③ New Suburban Single Family Gilbreath Way and North of Oak Grove Road along Alex Martin Road
- ③ Single lot SF along Hwy 19 Bus and Oak Grove Road
- ③ More density in north section
- ③ MHP North of the city, west of US Hwy, 19 Business
- ③ Continued development northern half
- ③ Infill commercial
- ③ Commercial nodes at Hwy 19B US 19/Cavender Creek SR 52 at Town Creek Church
- ③ Anticipated industrial along Cavender Creek just east of US 19—Light industrial
- ③ Level tope, good access to Dahlonega
- ③ Potential denser development close to GA 400 and the Dahlonega South and West Connector

■ **Crumby Planning Area**

- ③ Primarily vacant and undeveloped
- ③ Scattered low density single family on Cavender Creek Road and Rock house
- ③ Limited agriculture and scattered mobile home
- ③ Commercial Development: county stores, body shop along Cavender Creek Campground end of Hidden Valley Road
- ③ Mobile Home Town Creek Road, concentration eastern portion of Homer Edge Road
- ③ Northern low density single family and agriculture
 - ③ Single Family along Cavender Creek and Copper Mines Road
 - ③ River Front lots South of Cavender Creek Road

■ **Shoal Creek Planning Area**

- ③ Western portion—scattered single family along Blue Ridge View road, Pecks Mill Road
- ③ Mobile Home Concentration along Buckwood Circle
- ③ Central Subdivisions between Longbranch Road Extension Copper Mines Road and Grindle Brothers Road, Longbranch Road south of SR 52.
- ③ Scattered Mobile Home along Grindle Brother Road
- ③ East—Commercial development on SR 115 Convenience stores and auto shops
 - ③ Industrial and Junkyards
 - ③ Rural agriculture and low density single family

■ **Wahoo Planning Area**

- ③ Agriculture and very low density single family
- ③ Stonehenge mobile home subdivision and Camelot Subdivision along SR 115

■ **Martins Ford Planning Area**

- ③ Sparsely developed in the north and more densely developed in the south near Hall County
- ③ Scattered mobile homes on east side of Longbranch Road
- ③ Mainly subdivisions along SR 60 and 400, Chestatee River
- ③ SR 60 east of 400, along 7 Mile Hill Road, Martins Ford Road and Floyd Sullen's Road—single family and mobile homes
- ③ Subdivisions in southern most portions.

■ **Auraria Planning Area**

- ③ Historic in nature—first community in Lumpkin County
- ③ Diversity in land uses
- ③ Single Family residential development in the northwest section—Burnt Stand Road
- ③ MH and SF along Cain Bridge Road, Blackburn Road
- ③ MH subdivision south of Burnt Stand Road
- ③ Farming operations along Ben Higgins Road and Auraria Road (Forested)
- ③ Limited commercial development primarily along Auraria Road and scattered locations. Limited commercial along GA 400 corridor: Bill Elliot Ford, retail commercial complex
- ③ Lumpkin County Industrial Park southeast corner of GA 400 and Lumpkin County Parkway.
- ③ Poly Portables at the intersection of Ben Higgins Road and SR 9/52
- ③ Single Family residential development along Lake Lanier
- ③ Proposed commercial along Whelchel Road
- ③ Activity node recommended at the intersection of Auraria Road and Castelberry Bridge Road

■ **Mill Creek Planning Area**

- ③ Sparsely developed, rural section
- ③ Development node at State Route 9 and Mill Creek Church Road—single family, mobile homes and limited commercial uses
- ③ Agricultural—Rider Road, the end of Arrendal Road and the southern portion of the planning area west of State Route 9.
- ③ Timber—harvesting along Little Mountain Road
- ③ Mobile Homes on individual lots and small mobile home park are located along Castleberry Bridge Road.
- ③ Mobile homes along the east side of John Perry Road.
- ③ Proposed land use as very low density of agriculture, forestry and residences in north and northwest; development of Rider Road for agricultural use. Mixed single-family and mobile home development for southern section. Limited commercial near State Route 9 and Mill Creek Church Road.

■ **Davis Planning Area**

- ③ Small and densely developed. Rural but rapidly suburbanizing.
- ③ Mix of agricultural, with single family, mobile homes and home businesses, along with neighborhood commercial.
- ③ Northwestern portion of Planning Area within Chattahoochee National Forest. Small agricultural in this area.
- ③ Limited commercial along State Routes 9 and 52.
- ③ Future: Limited commercial proposed for State Routes 9 and 52. There are no future industrial land use plans.

■ **Nimblewill Planning Area**

- ③ Largest Planning Area within Lumpkin County. Entire area within Chattahoochee National Forest proclamation area and Blue Ridge Wildlife Management Area.
- ③ Only exception to above – South of State Route 52.
- ③ Undeveloped with low density of agriculture and single family residential.
- ③ Westernmost area of north of State Route 52 with significant low-density farm structure, mobile homes and single family residential.
- ③ No industrial.
- ③ Thriving resort and conference centers; country stores on State Route 52.
- ③ Proposed as parks, recreation, open space; rural agriculture and low density residential.

■ **Hightower Planning Area**

- ③ Most remote and undeveloped area in Lumpkin County – extreme topography.
- ③ Lake Nimblewill substantial portion of area.
- ③ Most development along Wahsega Road – low-density rural mixture land use.
- ③ Camp Wahsega and Frank Merrill Army Ranger Camp – two significant public – semi public areas.
- ③ Proposed to remain forest, rural agriculture and very low density residential.

■ **Cane Creek Planning Area**

- ③ Extends throughout northern one-half of County in north/south direction.
- ③ Northern portion in Chattahoochee National Forest.
- ③ Denser rural development along Black Mountain and Wahsega Roads.
- ③ Lumpkin County Airport located south-central portion.
- ③ Significant industrial and commercial development along Wahsega road, between Black Mountain Road and State Route 9.
- ③ Significant agriculture between Wahsega Road and Chattahoochee National Forest.
- ③ Future proposal calls for parks, open space and recreational areas for northern portion; low-density single family residential and mobile homes; some agriculture in southern-most portion.

■ **Yahoola Planning Area**

- ③ Northern two-thirds of Yahoola lies inside Chattahoochee National Forest.
- ③ Southern one-half contains development, which is low density rural.
- ③ Main road is State Route 9 along eastern boundary.
- ③ Proposed land use is for some scattered residential and commercial; remainder to contain parks, residential along with low-density agriculture.

Influences on Future Development

To promote quality growth and development within the county, a "focused growth model" of land use planning has been used. This land use planning model incorporates the following principals:

- Lower densities in areas of environmentally sensitive lands and areas not served by public infrastructure;
- Higher densities in strategic locations that provide access, public services and public infrastructure;
- Strategically located water and sewer services that take advantage of economic growth areas;
- Integrated land uses that help direct market forces that provide greater accessibility in linked locations; and
- Mixed use and master planned developments that integrate various housing types, and commercial and office development within village centers;

■ Land Use and Infrastructure Patterns

The continuous residential development without proper land use management throughout the county during the past twenty years has had a tremendous impact on infrastructure and public services. Of primary concern is the lack of water and sewerage in many portions of the unincorporated areas of the county and the subsequent reliance on septic systems. Much of the soils throughout Lumpkin County pose severe limitations to dwelling foundations and septic tank development. Approximately 39,430 acres or 21.2% of the county land area, have soils that pose slight to moderate limitations on dwelling foundations and septic tank utilization. Areas of unsuitable soils should remain low density in nature unless the County develops a public water and sewer system. Therefore, this land use plan proposes that growth and density be concentrated in areas of the county, which are served or are easily accessed by existing systems, and therefore leaving the rural unsewered areas in a lower density use.

Water & Sewer

While sewer and water serve the urbanized portion of the City of Dahlonega, the majority of the unincorporated County does not have service. Public water within Dahlonega is supplied from Yahoola Creek & Barlow Springs, which has a plant capacity of 1,400,000 gpd. Average consumption is 765,000 gpd. The sewerage plant capacity is 720,000 gpd, with an average plat load of 400,000 gpd at the primary treatment plant. Several

private water and/or sewerage plants are located throughout the county. Greater scrutiny and county-based standards should be developed to evaluate private systems to prevent future problems.

Lack of water and sewer has the potential of affecting land use as follows:

- Lack of public water severely limits county wide firefighting capacity and results in increased fire insurance rates
- The use of on-site septic tanks as a means of waste disposal may not be adequate in the long-term, will continue to limit density and may have health and environmental concerns in the future.
- Potential limitations on any efforts to attract large manufacturing and industrial development and multi-family development.

Limited potential exists for the expansion and extension of the City of Dahlonega's facility to serve portions of unincorporated Lumpkin County, as the County looks at future growth plans.

Transportation

The state road system comprises 18.3% of the total road system in Lumpkin County. The County primarily repairs and paves county roads, while the majority of road improvements (widening, extensions, intersection improvements) are completed by the State. The most heavily traveled routes in Lumpkin County include State Route 60, GA. 400, State Route 52, East Dahlonega Connector, State Route 115 and U.S. Highway 19. The majority of traffic congestion encountered is within the City of Dahlonega.

As part of the 10th year update the County will take a closer look at transportation facilities and develop a 10 year Transportation Improvement Plan. Although this more in-depth transportation information was not available during this amendment, the County has taken a preliminary look at what types of roads should primarily serve non-residential development during the Future Land Use Map planning stage. If the County finds that major changes are planned during the 10th year update and transportation study that would affect the Future Land Use Map, the County would revise the map at that time.

Municipal Services

The County provides fire services throughout the County. There are currently two stations: headquarters downtown and secondary station located along SR 115/SR 52. Fire insurance classification 7 within city. The county also provides countywide police protection. Health care is provided by the Lumpkin County Health

Center, a 52-bed hospital and through other private medical providers. Capital facility plans, including current capacity, level of service and future demand will be developed during the 10 year update to the Comprehensive Plan in 2004. The FLUM will assist in the location of these facilities.

■ **Environmentally Sensitive Areas**

A wealth of natural resources are found in Lumpkin County and warrant special attention during the update of the Future Land Use Plan. A balance between the natural and built environment should be maintained in order to enhance and protect the quality of life for Lumpkin County residents. The County is rich in cultural history, historic buildings and rural character, which contribute to a vibrant tourism industry. Following is a highlight of the variety of sensitive areas within the County:

- A Major portion of Lumpkin County is located within the Chattahoochee National Forest. Although private ownership within the Chattahoochee National Forest exists, for the most part this area cannot be developed.
- There are several scenic view corridors that should be enhanced with roadside parks, including: Chestatee River along Highway 60 north of 400, and Northwest of the Highway 60 Bridge across the Chestatee River.
- Wetlands: Lumpkin County contains one of three determinants for potential wetlands – “Hydric” soils. Of this category, Lumpkin contains four hydric soils throughout the county. Known wetlands are identified in the future land use plan and are designated to remain as open space.
- Watershed: Cited as “small” by DNR standards, the narrow watershed extends from northernmost Lumpkin to the northern city limits of Dahlonega. Currently addressed by Yahoola Creek and Ward Creek Watershed Protection Plan.
- River Protection: Chestatee River at terminus with Yahoola Creek meets protected river status. The length of the river portion, falling under the Lumpkin County River Protection Plans runs 7.5 miles between Yahoola Creek and Lake Lanier. State buffers of 100 feet are required along these banks. Currently the majority of the property adjacent to the river is either undeveloped or developed with a single-family dwelling. The continued enforcement of the Protected River Status will ensure that required buffers remain in the future.
- Protected Mountains: Limited to mountains with elevation of 2200’ feet or higher. Less than 280 acres of private property in Lumpkin County is classified as protected mountain. The County should consider adopting Mountain Protection for areas with elevations of less than 2200’, which are slated for development. The Land Use Code attempts to address this by giving development great flexibility for topography.
- The vast majority of land areas in the county have soils, which pose severe limitations to dwelling foundations and septic tank development. Approximately 39,430 acres, or 21.2% of the total County land area, have slight to moderate limitations on dwelling foundations and septic tank utilization. Unsuitable soils should remain low density in nature unless the County develops a public water and sewer system or approved community systems.

- Historic resources should be protected and enhanced whenever possible. Rural resources include many barns and outbuildings, remains of old gristmills and old bridges. The greatest majority of historic buildings are residential structures.

Land Development Practices and Soil and Erosion Control

Environmentally sensitive land development practices as outlined in the Land Use Code will assure that best management practices and sensitivity are applied to land development practices within the county. Cropland erosion accounts for about 38% and pasture and range erosion about 26% of sediment that reach the nation's waters each year. Regulations regarding development within floodplains, strong soil and erosion control measures and enforcement and the discouragement of clear cutting within the county were developed to protect sensitive resources. The County should continue to assist and encourage voluntary compliance with agricultural and forestry Best Management Practices.

■ Land Use Factors

Incompatible Land Use Relationships

Because of the lack of land use controls within the County, land use of various types have been scattered throughout the County. Lack of defined areas for residential, commercial and industrial uses without buffer or landscape standards has caused visual incompatibility and incompatible land use relationships between non-residential, residential property and agricultural properties. Poor designs, such as metal buildings, clear-cut properties and garish signs have contributed to the blight in several areas of the county. Businesses that were once classified at "cottage" industries have grown into large scaled commercial businesses without any restrictions or regard for infrastructure. Large scaled scattered commercial and industrial development within a residence or accessory building, specifically highway oriented business such as auto sales, service and repair, contractor's establishments, and other similar uses have negatively impacted residential uses. Included among identified conflicts are lack of coordination between infrastructure and land use, improper buffering between uses, the generation of large volumes of traffic and nuisance characteristics such as noise and odors.

Following are some specific incompatibilities, which have been identified:

- Nuisance land uses: Commercial uses industrial in character, such as junkyards and auto body shops have been developed throughout the County next to and within close proximity of residential uses.

- In the more rural areas of the County, there are several examples of agricultural and residential development incompatibility.
- Uncontrolled growth has had negative impacts on historic and natural resources especially along GA 400 and other major transportation corridors.
- Most residents feel that the County is being overrun with manufactured housing. Lack of design guidelines and standards has caused some residents in established stick built housing to feel threatened by the proximity of these structures to their subdivisions or individual lots.

Land Resources for Future Development

Vacant or underutilized land is scattered throughout Lumpkin County allowing plentifully land resources in each character area to meet the residential, commercial and employment needs of the county far into the future. As the county continues to grow, land resource availability will be continuously monitored to assure proper infrastructure planning and distribution of land use types to meet a growing population.

Outlook for Development

Lumpkin County looks to the future with optimism but should be cautious in guiding development. Development opportunities outweigh constraints by a comfortable margin, although care must be taken on the types of development that county attracts and where this development should be located. The current development trend of residential growth spreading throughout the rural areas and commercial strip development along major road corridors will promote sprawl and an infrastructure system unable to meet the demands of county residents and businesses. Proactive steps are necessary to guide growth to appropriate locations and densities within the County. The following discussion summarizes opportunities for future development within Lumpkin County and identifies potential constraints and concerns that emerged from the public participation process.

Future Land Use

■ Introduction

The intent of the Land Use Element is to identify the most desirable pattern of land use in Lumpkin County. The Future Land Use Map is a representation of the Comprehensive Plan's goals and policies, adopted plans, and, to a great extent, current development patterns and trends. The map shows the location of character areas while this LUPA identifies policies regarding these areas as a way to guide future growth in the county.

The development of the Future Land Use Map is based on the following:

- ③ Ensure that future land use and development decisions are consistent with long range planning goals and policies and that such decisions promote social and economic well-being;
- ③ Implement a land use plan that articulates a physical policy for a compact development pattern, preserves the rural character as much as possible, protects active agricultural uses and assures the availability of infrastructure concurrent with development;
- ③ Designate sufficient acreage for residential, commercial and industrial uses as required to serve projected future residents and employees within the county;
- ③ Encourage and promote clean, high tech industrial development that strengthens the economic base of the community and minimizes air and water pollution;
- ③ Promote development that is pedestrian-oriented, community centered and minimizes vehicular trips; and
- ③ Coordinate density and infrastructure patterns.

■ Interpretation

The Land Use Plan Amendment is developed with the concept that the Future Land Use Map and the text are to be used as an integrated whole, with the map being a graphic representation of the text.

Interpretation of the Future Land Use Map is a process, which rests on the goals and policies expressed in the text. The land use designations on the map, both in terms of overall definition and intensity of land use types, require that policies and intent statements regulating the development and location of each land use type be evaluated and applied in the process of plan implementation.

■ Land Use Management--The Lumpkin County Approach

Lumpkin County choose a land use management tool that utilizes a single map for planning and land use regulation, rather than separate maps for the future land use plan and land use code map. The key is to link the Future Land Use Map directly to the land use regulation by creating land use plan categories that are more

descriptive of the actual desired character of development (i.e., agricultural preservation, residential growth areas). Within the Land Use Code specific land use that are suitable to the overall character of the district are preferred land uses. Other land uses, although not specifically prohibited, require additional development standards to achieve compatibility within the overall character of the area. This approach provides a direct link between planning and implementation, and allows proposed changes to be considered within the context of a community's long-range plan.

This approach is the "hybrid" concept that combines aspects of both traditional zoning and compatibility standards. Character areas describe the overall "feel" of the area, while compatibility standards and design guidelines provide for mixing of uses that promote a beneficial interaction of uses that lesson negative impacts. Using the overall intent of a character area as a policy guide to appropriate land uses and related compatibility standards, land uses can be integrated in a positive way.

Compatibility Standards

Because of the lack of a formalized development tool, land use in the Lumpkin County has developed purely through market forces without regard to land use compatibility, natural resource preservation or infrastructure planning. Although there are obvious concentration areas within the County, the predominate current development pattern is a mixture of uses. To discourage establishing a large number of nonconforming uses, character areas description of the "feel" of this mixed use development pattern are proposed to include both residential and nonresidential land uses. In addition to identifying the overall character of the area, i.e., large lot rural land uses and small neighborhood commercial, specific performance standards have been developed, such as access requirements, landscape design and buffer controls to lesson impact on neighboring properties.

Community Character Areas and Development Patterns

There are a variety of ways to achieve the County's vision for the future. From an urban design standpoint, the key is to avoid dispersed development projects that are unrelated to one another and exist in isolation at random locations without regard to infrastructure investment or planning. Instead, by focusing appropriate development within distinct character areas, corridors and nodes and arranging these centers within a comprehensive

circulation system that incorporates multiple modes of transportation, the County will achieve a sustainable development pattern that will carry them through to the year 2020.

As stated in *The Vision for Lumpkin County*, the County's vision for the future is based on a pattern of continued growth focused on identified development nodes, corridors and character areas that discourage urban sprawl, inefficient use of infrastructure, and land use incompatibility. These "Community Character Areas" are intended to ensure compatible and unified development within specified areas of the County. The Future Land Use Map is broken into the following Community Character Areas:

- Agricultural Preservation
- Rural Places
- Residential Growth Areas
- Neighborhood Village Center
- Community Village Center
- Gateway Corridor
- Commerce Corridors
- Intensive Industrial

As described in the next section, these Community Character Areas define the overall land use characteristics in generalized areas of the County, such as density, land use, economic development, natural and historic resources and types of community facilities.

Future Land Use Categories

The Future Land Use Map is a representation of the plan's goals and policies and indicates where various types of land uses are preferred. Character areas are grouped under the predominant types of land use type, although all character areas allow a mixture of uses. Descriptions of the County's character areas are described below.

■ Agricultural Preservation

Farming is a viable and desirable way of life within Lumpkin County. It provides jobs, contributes to the local economy and creates demand for support business. Lumpkin County also depends on the scenic beauty created by open pastureland, cultivated cropland, and managed woodland to attract tourists to hike on its trails, stay in its bed and breakfasts and to buy local crafts and food products. Family farms, agricultural operations, conservation areas, vast natural and scenic resources and a rural landscape are a large part of the community's identity and culture.

The preservation of the overall rural character and the preservation of the family-farming heritage are high priorities for the citizens of the county. The intent of the Agricultural Preservation Character Area is to preserve and reduce development pressure on existing conservation and agricultural uses, provide areas for future expansion of these uses and to provide for compatibility standards to lessen the impact between non-compatible uses, especially residential and active agricultural uses. This character area encourages active conservation, farming, commercial agricultural uses and very low-density large lot residential development. This character area discourages "conventional" subdivision development, and acts as a buffer as suburban development creeps into the County's agricultural areas. Because of this rural orientation, it is expected that a lower level of public services and facilities be provided to lessen development pressure in the area.

**Preserve
Family
Farms**

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Guiding principles.

To retain the rural character of the Agricultural Preservation Character Area, encouraged uses are primarily agriculturally related uses and operations, and very low-density residential uses. Residential uses within the district are intended to be primarily scattered single-family homes (site built and manufactured) on 3 acres or greater, or compatible large lot, conservation, and equestrian oriented subdivisions. Separations between residential and agricultural uses are required to lessen negative impacts to both farms and residential properties. The following guiding principles are to be used as a guide during the land development process:

- Intensive farming areas may result in odors, dust, noise or other effects that may not be compatible with residential development. Conversely, residential development can have negative effects on agricultural uses as more people mean more children and pets that can intrude into agricultural production. Adequate buffer must be provided to lessen incompatible impact.
- Vast areas of sensitive natural and historic resources, including large portions of the Chattahoochee National Forest require a lower developmental impact.
- Public water and sewerage is not planned, nor are regional public facilities, thereby requiring a very small residential population through large lot development.

This area includes the northern portion of Porter Springs, the eastern and southern portions of the Shoal Creek Planning Area, the westernmost portion of Nimblewill, the Southern portion of Cane Creek, the southern portion of Yahoola, Mill Creek and Wahoo.

■ **Summary of Residential Land use**

This Land Use Plan Amendment addresses compatibility issues, by instituting compatibility standards for residential, agricultural uses and non-residential uses and an emphasis on land use and infrastructure planning. On the Future Land Use Map, the “Residential” category is divided into one of two character areas: Rural

Places (low-density residential), and Residential Growth Areas (medium density residential). Densities and minimum lot sizes are determined by whether public water and sewer are available.

Rural Places

Many areas of Lumpkin County are shifting from an agricultural base to one of mixed residential, commercial and industrial land development. The intent of the Rural Places Character Area is to provide a residential-agricultural community, which benefits from its scenic rural landscape with much of its identity based on its agrarian past while accommodating residential growth. In order to maintain the agricultural, economic, environmental and aesthetic benefits provide by the rural and natural landscape this character area encourages development opportunities by means of clustering development at farmsteads and large lot homesteads, crossroad hamlets, or within large lot conservation and master planned developments. This character area encompasses outlying areas of the county where water and sewer lines are not planned during the current Comprehensive Plan timeframe.

**Transition
from Rural to
Residential**

Guiding Principles.

The overall character of the area is “rural” consisting of small-scale farms and low density residential on large home sites. The following guiding principles were used in the development of this Character Area:

- The agrarian and rural character shall be maintained as much as possible.
- Preserve this area as a transition from active large scale agriculture to residential uses;
- Provide opportunities for small farms and a low-density residential population in a rural setting.

Rural places are found in the outlying areas of the County, outside identified centers, portions of Niblewill, Hightower, Cane Creek and Yahoola, Chestatee, Frogtown, Porter Springs, Crumbly, Wahoo and Davis.

Residential Growth Area

As Lumpkin County continues to experience growth in both residential and commercial development, areas meant for traditional subdivision and commercial growth are necessary. The intent of this character area is to channel growth pressures to areas that are

**Traditional
Subdivisions**

suitable in terms of land use patterns and infrastructure investment, and to areas that have a more “urban” feel. Areas designated as Residential Growth Areas are located primarily within areas that are currently experiencing urbanization and growth pressures, such as outside of City of Dahlonega and within areas that public water & sewer and transportation investment are planned. Minimum lot size varies by type of unit and whether public water and sewer serves the lot.

Guiding Principles

This character area encourages the development of a medium density urban population within traditional subdivision development in order to efficiently provide infrastructure, serve expected future population growth and to provide a variety of housing types. The following guiding principles were used in the development of this character area:

- These areas are located outside identified centers that are experiencing a high volume of residential growth and development pressure.
- The County will concentrate its resources and infrastructure development within this character area to ensure efficient public investment. Public water is either planned or available in this area, although with limited planned public sewer. The development of State approved community systems is encouraged.
- Residential population is medium density in nature and primarily single-family houses, and conventional subdivisions. Other types of housing types such as townhouses and multi-family developments are provided for in areas that have the appropriate infrastructure (transportation access, public water and sewer) to provide a wide range of housing for current and future residents of the County.
- Due to the tourist orientation of the County, “Cottage Industries” and small-scaled “Residential Businesses” add to the overall fabric of this Character area.
- Regional level community facilities, such as parks, active recreation areas, community centers, schools, libraries and senior centers within this Character Area are located or planned in central locations.
- Although this character area is the most “urban” in nature, sensitivity to the natural and rural character is to be maintained as much as possible.
- Due to a higher residential orientation and density stronger development standards such as buffers, setbacks, access and design guidelines to assure compatibility between uses is required in this character area.

This character area includes portions of Shola Creek, Auraria, the southern portion of Mill Creek, Chestatee and Frogtown.

■ **Commercial**

The commercial category contains several use designations that, collectively, include all business activities other than intensive industrial uses. These include offices, retail sales, services and light industrial. Commercial activities have been designated within “village centers” and corridors varying in intensity depending on surrounding land use and infrastructure. Commercial areas have been identified on the Future Land Use Map in three major character areas: Neighborhood and Historic Crossroad Village Center, Community Village Center, Gateway Corridor and Commerce Corridor. Non-residential development is also permissible in certain areas as part of master planned mixed-use developments, and within differencing intensities within the overall character districts. Non-residential areas have been developed in centers and corridors at appropriate locations to avoid “retail creep.”

The table on the following page is a brief description of each commercial character area.

Commercial Character Areas			
Commercial Type	Description	Intensity of Use	Character Area
Neighborhood Village	Small-scaled convenience stores and services designed to serve daily local needs, located primarily at historic crossroad and junctions within the county.	Very small-scaled retail to serve adjacent area. No businesses shall be over 30,000 square feet. Shops are primarily in the range of 3,000 to 6,000 square feet.	All character areas—located at designated intersection nodes that are primarily rural in character and/or surrounding by low-density residential and agricultural development.
Community Village	Mixed use commercial and office uses designed to serve several neighborhoods. Regional scaled retail, services and employment centers. Regional public facilities such as schools, parks & libraries. Integrated housing encouraged	“Main Street” style retail within planned developments, small employment generators.	Residential Growth—located at intersection nodes that provide sufficient transportation access and buffering.
Commerce Corridor	Large scaled commercial, intensive office, light industrial, distribution, and major employment generators. “park development” is preferred.	Larger land uses, major employment centers and auto oriented retail.	Major transportation corridors that provide good access; increased buffering between other uses.
Gateway Corridor	Large scaled commercial, office, high technology and distribution uses that are designed to present a unified image along major corridors of the county.	Major employment generations and planned centers.	Development located along major roadways and traffic corridors leading into the County.

Neighborhood Village Center

Neighborhood Village Centers are places where small-scaled commercial uses, such as a bank, grocery store, drug store, cleaner, and gas station, are arranged in a village-like setting that might include a neighborhood park or elementary school. Neighborhood centers are located throughout the county at major crossroad areas, and have developed over the years to serve local needs. These areas are typically rural in character and tend to attract residents who desire single-family homes on large lots. Thus, a neighborhood center is envisioned as a

compact assortment of convenience-oriented retail stores and services to address the demands of adjacent residents in less urbanized parts of the county, focusing on historic or natural resources of the area. Adaptive re-use of historic structures and buildings is encouraged as a focal point.

The
neighborhood
butcher, baker,
candlestick
maker

From an urban design perspective, sidewalks and linkages are important circulation features, but even more important is the scale of the roads that serve these areas. Given its small scale and often pastoral nature, a neighborhood center would be overwhelmed by wide thoroughfares carrying high-speed traffic and instead should rely on more modestly scaled roadways and tree-lined streets.

Neighborhood Village Centers have been identified in Frogtown at Garnett Bridge and Shoffret Road, in Porter Springs at Cavender Creek Road with Rail Hill Road.

Community Village Center

Typically located at the convergence of major transportation corridors, Commercial Village Centers are envisioned as places where a compatible mixture of higher intensity of uses, such as larger scaled shopping

The place to
go for all your
family's
needs

centers, professional office and services. Mixed-use developments that combine residential, commercial, service and recreational uses integrated and linked together by a comprehensive circulation system are encouraged in these nodes. Community village centers include shopping and service facilities that offer a wide variety of goods and services, including both convenience goods for neighborhood residents and shopping goods for a market area consisting of several neighborhoods. Whereas someone might live near a neighborhood village

center but work outside the county, the commercial village concept includes a variety of housing options, employment opportunities, businesses, office, retail shops, services, well-placed parks, plazas and open spaces that create a community where it is possible to live, work and play.

These land use components coexist as part of a collective approach to creating communities that are safe, attractive, and convenient for pedestrians and motorists alike. Buildings should be designed to conform to architectural standards and oriented in close proximity to each other to facilitate walking instead of driving. Natural and historic resources within community village centers should be enhanced and preserved as a means of defining a distinct identity or sense of place. Community facilities such as schools, branch libraries, and government services, serve as anchors for community village centers and help to create identity. Access is provided through a comprehensive system of streets, sidewalks and greenways that intersect at key locations and connect residential areas to commercial uses.

Commerce Corridor

Commerce Centers are envisioned as destinations for expanded interstate trade opportunities that accommodate higher densities in order to create a synergy between retail, office, industry and other commercial uses. Less pedestrian oriented than Neighborhood or Community Villages, Commerce Centers are dependent upon access not only to transportation networks, but also to technology and communication infrastructures. Similarly, the provision of adequate public services in the form of water, sewer, and power are critical to the functionality of these areas.

**Auto Driven
Power
Shopping**

Under normal circumstances, major commercial uses and employment generators may place heavy demands on public facilities or cause significant impacts on the environment. The industrial uses allowed in the county are not intended to create such problems or demands. The intent of the Commerce Corridor designation is to provide a variety of tracts for heavy commercial uses, light industrial and employment uses that are limited to office and business parks, large scale commercial, office-warehouse centers, distribution/service, light industrial, high-technology and researching, wholesaling companies and similar businesses that have no significant impacts on the environment. Because of the intensity of use and its potential relationship to residential uses, heavy industrial and manufacturing is prohibited in this character area. When located at the perimeter of a Future Land Use Map Commerce Corridor area, uses that are lower in intensity and scale to ensure minimal impact to adjacent properties is required.

From an urban design standpoint, the most critical element in creating a visually appealing Commerce Corridor is the enforcement of appropriate development standards to ensure adequate site plans and landscaping. Buffers are critical between incompatible uses and guidelines that address signage and lighting will help to mitigate the negative impacts of a high concentration of commercial uses. While Lumpkin County is focused on attracting only clean industries to the area, such establishments still require large warehouse buildings and vast amounts of parking and loading/unloading areas that should be screened from view. In addition, certain commercial uses

such as car dealerships require careful site planning to minimize curb cuts and reduce the perception of parking as the primary use.

Gateway Commercial

Several major road corridors are considered to be scenic rural vistas: State Route 400, State Route 60, State route 52 and Long Branch Road. Georgia 400 and State Route 60 provide the “Gateway” into the County and the City of Dahlonega. In order to maintain the rural and scenic vistas that are important to the county’s citizens this area requires special treatment to assure proper development along the

**Shop, Work &
Play in a
Great
Environment**

entrance into the county. From an urban design standpoint, the most critical element in creating a visually appealing gateway corridor is the enforcement of appropriate development standards to ensure adequate site plans and landscaping. Buffers are critical between incompatible uses and guidelines that address signage and lighting will help to mitigate the negative impacts of a high concentration of commercial uses. Vast amounts of parking and loading/unloading areas should be screened from view. Where possible the parking areas should be distributed to two or more sides of the business to “visually scale down” the size of the parking lot. Inter-parcel access between sites should be used whenever possible. Grouping or “clustering” of shops with co-mingled parking, landscaping and pedestrian areas is encouraged. In addition, certain commercial uses such as car dealerships, truck terminals and car washes require careful site planning to minimize curb cuts and reduce the perception of parking as the primary use.

The intent of the gateway corridor character area is to:

- Provide for locations of higher intensity, large scale commercial and employment opportunities that require major road access and visibility to serve the economic and future financial success of the county.
- To aid in preventing traffic congestion, hazardous traffic patterns and the efficient use of community facilities.
- To guide and facilitate development that preserves and enhances the natural beauty of Lumpkin County, and particularly the main roadways and traffic corridors leading into its municipalities and the county.
- To balance the opportunities to develop trade, tourism and commerce with the need to preserve the unique natural and historic resources and residential population of the county.

The provision of adequate public services in the form of water, sewer, and power are critical to the functionality of these areas.

Intensive Industrial

This area is established to provide for intensive industrial uses such as landfills, quarries, and other industrial uses that are potential public nuisances, are identified as environmentally hazardous or are potentially dangerous to health, safety or general welfare of the county. Such uses require a Special Land Use Approval (SLUA) in order to be located anywhere in the County.

Other Land Use Categories

Transportation/Communications/Utilities

This category designates existing electric substations, telephone facilities, cable TV, transmission towers, satellite downlink operations in the county as well as roads and highways. There are no known plans for future locations for such facilities, which will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The category also includes all streets and highways in the county.

Parks/Recreation/Open Space

The Parks/Recreation/Open Space land use classification is for those areas within the county that has been developed for park or recreation use or is designated open space. The recreation and park areas illustrated on the map include existing or proposed neighborhood, community and regional parks, recreation facilities and golf courses. Not all developed or needed open space areas are indicated on the Future Land Use Map. Open space is required in all Opens Space and Subdivisions and Master Planned Developments submitted to the County and may be required in other developments when necessary to address recreational and aesthetic concerns, or to create a buffer between different land uses, or as required by the Land Use Code. This category also includes rivers and stream buffers established by law and open space protected by conservation easements.

Public/institutional

This designation includes existing sites and facilities in public ownership for such uses as medical, educational, cultural, governmental, administrative and protective services, and cemeteries. Existing churches also include in this category. Future Public/institutional uses are not shown on the Future Land Use Map, since they may be located within any character area and future locations are not yet known.

Undeveloped

All land within the County has been identified as one character area or the other in order to link the Future Land Use Map to the Land Use Code. Therefore no undeveloped land is identified on the future land use map although many individual properties will continue to be undeveloped within the various character areas in the future.

Future Land Use Development Summary

As population, business and industrial growth continue, by 2025 over 54,000 acres of the unincorporated portion of the county are expected to be consumed by land development pressures for new homes, shops, offices, and other employment opportunities. Over this period, almost 30.6% of unincorporated Lumpkin County, much of it currently vacant or in agricultural use, will experience such development activities and pressures.

■ **Future Land Use Acreages**

The following table presents the amount of land shown on the Future Land Use Map in the various character areas and other land use categories in unincorporated Lumpkin County.

Future Land Use Unincorporated Lumpkin County	
Character Area/Land Use	Acreage
Agricultural Preservation	49,244.56
Rural Places	27,438.05
Residential Growth Area	27,808.97
Neighborhood Village Center	1,492.60
Community Village Center	851.74
Gateway Corridor	3,240.90
Commerce Corridor	984.15
Intensive Industrial	0.00
Transportation/Communication/Utilities	3,463.08
Public/Institutional	1,636.40
Recreation/Open Space/Conservation	61,629.61
Total – Unincorporated Area	177,790.06

As discussed earlier in this Land Use Plan, all of the unincorporated areas of the county have been assigned to a character area designation or land use category. This will enable the Land Use Plan Map to guide land

development and in establishing compatibility standards for various uses within each character area and between different uses.

■ **Population and Housing Forecasts**

Growth in Lumpkin County will drive demand for land development and thus “consume” land for residential and nonresidential use. The following table is summarized from the Forecasts and Development Demand Analysis. By 2025, population and housing is projected to almost triple.

Household and Dwelling Unit Forecast—2000-2025						
Unincorporated Lumpkin County						
	Population	Persons in Group Quarters	Net Population	Persons per Household	Dwelling Units	Notes
2000	17,534	159	17,375	2.68	7,082	
2005	28,510	204	28,306	2.64	10,722	
2010	34,925	1,050	33,875	2.60	13,029	
2015	42,780	1,462	41,318	2.59	15,953	
2020	52,410	2,028	50,352	2.59	19,441	
2024	66,661	2,878	63,783	2.61	24,438	

■ **Employment by Land Use Category**

In order to estimate future demand for nonresidential development, future employment estimates were translated from employment by economic sector to land use categories. Employment by land use category is estimated by applying the percentages of employment by category to specific land uses. The Public land use category has been added, reflecting federal, State and local government employees included on the Table. The following table summarizes 2003 and 2025 employment by employment category and by land use category for unincorporated Lumpkin County. Some employees do not generate demand for land development (such as itinerant construction subcontractors), and thus the totals for employment by category are larger than the totals allocated to the land use categories.

Employment Forecast by Land Use Unincorporated Lumpkin County		
	2003	2025
Employment by Economic Sector		
Agricultural Services; Mining	338	286
Construction	611	4,042
Manufacturing	631	2,180
Transport, Communications & Utilities	194	871
Wholesale Trade	95	375
Retail Trade	919	8,783
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	261	2,351
Services	1,098	8,897
Government	801	4,296
TOTAL by Employment Sector	4,948	32,081
Employment by Land Use Category		
Retail Commercial	1,158	10,602
Office	1,461	10,814
Industrial	841	3,621

Public	801	4,296
TOTAL by Land Use Category*	4,261	29,333
*Most farmers and some construction workers do not create demand for urban land use categories.		

■ **Comparison of Existing and Future Land Use**

Comparisons between the land uses shown on the Existing Land Use Map and the Future Land Use Map are difficult because, while the former locates actual uses, the Future map covers large areas that are considered appropriate for a mixture of uses by intensity and character, rather than specific uses. Because the County will utilize their Future Land Use Map as the sole representative guide for their Land Use Management Tool, the entire county has been mapped into one character area or another, even though much of these latter areas will remain undeveloped in 2025. Two tables are presented in this section: one comparing existing and future land use acreages by standard land use category, and one making the same comparison but based on the Future Land Use Plan's character area categories, with some land use type break-outs where appropriate.

The following table presents land use acreages in unincorporated Lumpkin County based on the predominant land use categories shown on the Existing Land Use Map. Acreages from the Future Land Use Map are translated into these same categories from the character area data. Existing "undeveloped" acres are considered to be dormant but agricultural in nature, given the county's strong agricultural base. Note that there are no areas identified as "industrial" on the Future Land Use Map because these areas are included within the commercial character areas; thus, while the table implies that the existing industrial areas will disappear, they are in fact only moved to a different category for plan implementation purposes

Change in Acreages by Land Use Category Unincorporated Lumpkin County			
Land Use Category	Existing Acreage	Future Acreage	Change (in Acres)
<i>Timberlands</i>	36,500.28		
<i>Farmlands</i>	25,228.00		
<i>Undeveloped</i>	36,243.39		
Agriculture/Forestry: Subtotal	96,369.30	49,244.56	(47,124.74)
Residential	16,171.01	55,247.02	39,076.01
Commercial	2,352.15	5,494.39	3,142.24
Industrial	138.13	1,212.13	1,025.00
<i>TCU: Roads and Highways</i>	3,397.06	3,397.06	--
<i>TCU: Communication & Utilities</i>	2.66	66.02	63.36
Transportation/Communication/Utilities: Subtotal	3,399.72	3,463.08	63.36
Public/Institutional	976.64	1,636.40	659.76
<i>PRC: National Forest</i>	57,038.00	57,038.00	--
<i>PRC: Parks/Recreation</i>	1,345.11	1,345.11	--
<i>PRC: State River Buffers</i>	--	3,246.50	3,246.50
Parks/Recreation/Conservation: Subtotal	58,383.11	61,629.61	3,246.50
Total – Unincorporated Area	177,790.06	177,790.06	--

The second table in this section, below, compares existing and future land use acreages by character area as shown on the Future Land Use Map. In order to show such a comparison, categories are combined where necessary. As explained within the section on “Future Land use Categories,” Lumpkin County has utilized a unique system of “Character Areas” on their Future Land Use Map as the basis for their Land Use Management Tool (a one map system). Each character area has a predominate land use type associated with it, such as agriculture within “Agricultural Preservation” or Highway type commerce (big box, warehousing) within the “Commerce Corridor,” although no land use is prohibited within any area, with the exception of “intensive industrial.” Classifications are based on intensity and impact of use, rather than actual traditional zoning and land use classifications such as “residential,” “commercial,” and “industrial.” A detailed outline of mixed uses

types within commercial village and corridor can be found on the “Commercial Character Area” table. As noted, since each character area has the potential to contain any type of use, it would be impossible to allocate the traditional land use classifications identified on the previous table by character area. Therefore, the projected demand of 3,142.24 additional commercial acres and the 1,025 additional industrial acres could potentially be distributed within all character area. Intensive industrial uses, as further classified within the Land Use Management Tool, are the only uses that have been separately categorized since they are allowed only within the “Intensive Industrial” character area.

Change in Land Use Acreage by Character Area Unincorporated Lumpkin County			
Character Area/Land Use	Existing Acreage	Future Acreage	Change (in Acres)
Agricultural Preservation	96,369.30	49,244.56	(47,124.74)
Rural Places	16,171.01	55,247.02	39,076.01
Residential Growth Areas			
Neighborhood Village Center			
Community Village Center	2,352.15	6,431.26	4,079.11
Gateway Corridor			
Commerce Corridor			
Intensive Industrial	138.13	138.13	0
Transportation/Communication/Utilities	3,399.72	3,463.08	63.36
Public/Institutional	976.64	1,636.40	659.76
Recreation/Open Space/Conservation	58,383.11	61,629.61	3,246.50
Total – Unincorporated Area	177,790.06	177,790.06	0

Changes within the City of Dahlonega are not shown on the table above. While existing land use data is available countywide, the City of Dahlonega is independently responsible for their own future land use planning and for regulation of land use and development.

■ **Land Demand for New Growth**

As noted above, by 2025 over 54,000 acres in the unincorporated areas of the county are expected to become developed, prepared for development or designated by market pressures for development. In “real” acres of actual construction (i.e., a building on a lot), this represents some 23,000 acres. As discussed in the Forecasts and Development Demand Analysis, actual building construction represents only a portion of land “consumed” by development. A residential subdivision consumes land through development even if it only contains vacant lots. Similarly, vacant “spin” sites at a shopping center, land set aside for “phase two” projects, and land otherwise graded and prepared for development can consume land as irreversibly as actual building construction.

Only acres for future residential, commercial, industrial and governmental/institutional uses are included in the Land Demand Analysis calculations. Land to be consumed for Transportation/Communication/Utilities, Public/Institutional and Recreation/Open Space/Conservation uses (including the National Forest) are shown on the existing and future land use comparison tables above.

■ **Allocation of Demand to Character Areas**

The Lumpkin County Land Use Plan embraces variety and exceptional design in its vision, its goals and objectives, and in its implementing regulations. Multi-use villages and corridors and other concepts infuse the Future Land Use Map. The following table presents a summary from the Forecasts and Development Demand Analysis of anticipated future development and the character areas where it is anticipated to be located.

The following table shows the percentage of each land use demand category assigned to each character area where each use is most likely to be developed. Thus, the table reflects both the allocation of future development and the land use mix and proportions expected, in general, in each character area.

2025 Development Demand by Character Area Unincorporated Lumpkin County										
	Rural Single-Family	Suburban Single-Family	Urban Single-Family	Duplex	Multi-Family	Commercial	Office	Industrial	Government Administration	Total
Demand by Land Use Type (acres)	21,685	26,780	1,115	635	485	1,665	755	1,075	115	54,310
Allocation of Demand to Character Areas	<div> <div>Agricultural Preservation</div> <div>20%</div> </div>									
	<div> <div>Rural Places</div> <div>60% 25%</div> </div>									
	<div> <div>Residential Growth</div> <div>20% 72% 70% 50% 20%</div> </div>									
	<div> <div>Neighborhood Village</div> <div>30% 30% 20%</div> </div>									
	<div> <div>Community Village</div> <div>10% 30% 40% 20% 20% 40%</div> </div>									
	<div> <div>Gateway Corridor</div> <div>3% 20% 20% 40% 30% 40% 30% 30%</div> </div>									
	<div> <div>Commerce Corridor</div> <div>20% 10% 70% 10%</div> </div>									
Demand by Land Use Plan Character Area (acres)	Agricultural Preservation	Rural Places	Residential Growth	Subtotal Residential	Neigh. Village	Community Village	Gateway Corridor	Commerce Corridor	Subtotal Nonres.	Total All Areas
	4,337	19,706	24,814	48,857	749	1,026	2,506	1,173	5,453	54,310

This last table takes the allocation percentages from the previous table and multiplies them times the total demand for each land use category. Thus, the following table shows the actual acres allocated to each character area instead of the percentages. These acreages represent total land expected to be consumed by new development by 2025.

Distribution of New Growth—2003-2025										
Unincorporated Lumpkin County										
	Rural Single-Family	Suburban Single-Family	Urban Single-Family	Duplex	Multi-Family	Commercial	Office	Industrial	Government Administration	Total
Agricultural Preservation	4,337	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4,337
Rural Places	13,011	6,695	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	19,706
Residential Growth Areas	4,337	19,282	781	318	97	-	-	-	-	24,814
Neighborhood Villages	-	-	-	-	-	500	227	-	23	749
Community Villages	-	-	112	191	194	333	151	-	46	1,026
Gateway Corridor	-	803	223	127	194	500	302	323	35	2,506
Commerce Corridor	-	-	-	-	-	333	76	753	12	1,173
Intensive Industrial	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total – Unincorporated County	21,685	26,780	1,115	635	485	1,665	755	1,075	115	54,310
Note: All figures are shown in acres.										

† Land Use Goal ... manage growth and development based on physical, social, and economic needs, environmental considerations, and the ability of the tax base and public facilities and services to support such growth and development.

- ⑤ Ensure future land use and development decisions are consistent with long-range planning goals and policies, and that such decisions promote social and economic well-being.
- ⑤ Promote well-designed and planned development that will preserve open space and environmentally critical areas where feasible.
- ⑤ Develop a land use plan that minimizes land use incompatibilities.
- ⑤ Promote the low-density rural character of outlying remote areas in the County, consistent with other development goals and objectives.
- ⑤ Implement a land use plan that articulates a physical policy for a compact urban area to minimize environmental impacts, assure the availability of utilities concurrent with development, and minimize public service costs.
- ⑤ Coordinate development with the provision of public services and facilities.

Strategies that will address these needs include...

- ⑤ Promote subdivisions that foster a sense of community and foster pedestrian mobility, the natural environment, community recreation, and public open space.
- ⑤ Use infrastructure as a tool to guide development into locations where the land is most cost effectively serviced (i.e., accessible to police, fire, sewer and the urban road network), with protection for the integrity of established neighborhoods.
 - ③ Adopt public service and facility standards that ensure new development will only be approved when the facilities to serve it will be concurrently available.
 - ③ Implement a system of interrelated land use and capital improvements planning.
 - ③ Monitor development's impact on existing or future infrastructure capacities.
- ⑤ Provide suitable areas for continuation and expansion of low-density rural mixtures of site-built dwellings and manufactured homes with non-intensive agricultural uses.
- ⑤ Revise the subdivision review program, or develop performance standards, so that each subdivision fronts on a public or private street with suitable access, width, all weather surfacing and drainage, rather than fronting and deriving access on a major thoroughfare.
- ⑤ Ensure suitable land is available for the projected acres of future residential, commercial and industrial development.
- ⑤ Through the Future Land Use Plan, conserve those areas with soils and other characteristics that are most suitable for prime agricultural land through designation as agricultural or very low density residential.
- ⑤ Designate on the Future Land Use Plan preferred locations for non-residential development that limit encroachment and impacts on residential areas.
 - ③ Encourage nodal development in order to avoid commercial sprawl. Retail areas should be well defined to avoid "retail creep" beyond designated commercial areas.
 - ③ Promote regional and community commercial development at locations near intersections of existing or planned major thoroughfares designated for commercial uses.
 - ③ Establish the location for industrial uses within industrially designated areas and planned industrial parks.

- ③ Establish standards requiring buffers between non-residential and residential uses when adjacent to one another.
- ⑤ Develop design plans for major entranceways into the County to serve as a guide for future development.
- ⑤ Integrate existing cottage industries in a way that does not negatively impact surrounding residential uses. Lumpkin County's greatest strength is its proactive and concerned residents.